
IMPRIMATUR.

October, 24.
1692.

Guil. Lancaster, R.P.D.
Hen. Epif. Lond. à
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A
Practical Discourse
UPON
PRAYER.

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A

Practical Discourse

U P O N

P R A Y E R.

THere is not any one act of Religion, which carries with it a more beautiful Lustre; or which is of greater use to us in all manner of respects; or which is more strictly required by the Laws of God; or better recommended to us by the practice of God's Saints, especially by the most holy Example of our blessed Saviour himself, than that of Prayer. And for this reason, I think I cannot do a more becoming or better Office, than to discourse upon this Subject after a plain practical manner; as fully, and yet as briefly as I can.

By Prayer I mean now, not only Supplication to God, or the Asking and Begging at his hands all such things as we want both for our Souls and Bodies; but (in the largest sense of the word) the Praising, and Blessing of his Holy

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Name.

Name also, and the giving him thanks for all those Benefits, which we have already received from him. And in discoursing upon this Subject, I shall proceed after this easie instructive Method.

I.

First, I shall consider the Motives, which serve to kindle and increase in us a Spirit of Devotion.

II.

And then Secondly, For the due performance of this great thing, I shall shew the way and manner, after which it is to be done.

Now there are several Motives unto Prayer, which may be taken, 1. Partly from the Consideration of God's Nature and Works, and 2. Partly too from the Consideration of Prayer it self.

I.

First, The Greatness and Majesty of God is so infinite, and he is so infinitely exalted above all things else, that he deserves, and is highly worthy of all manner of Adoration, by reason of the Perfections and Glories of his Nature. All worship is founded upon the real, or at least supposed Dignity of the Object; and the very blindest People in every Nation pay it, because they believe that there is something above them, and that the Being they worship is better and greater than themselves. We therefore to whom the true and ever-blessed God hath been pleased to reveal himself so plainly from



from Heaven, should never fail in this part of our Duty to him, because we know him to be the most Excellenr Being in the World, Higher than all that are in the Earth, exalted far above all Gods (or, above the Higheſt Dignities) *Pſal.* 97. 9. God hath ſo manifeſted himſelf in times paſt by his Prophets, and in the laſt days by the Eternal Son of his Boſom, that if People would but look upon him by Faith, and with attentive Minds contemplate thoſe admirable Glories, wherewith he ſhines, it would naturally move them to proſtrate themſelves before him, and to offer up the affections of their Souls to him. For the Reaſons of our Devotions are in his own moſt perfect Nature; and thoſe perfections which we diſcover there, do caſt ſuch a powerful influence upon our Minds, that they ſet the Faculties of the Soul preſently on work; and after a moſt kindly manner excite us to ſuch acts of Adoration, as are ſuitable to thoſe apprehenſions we have of the Divine Being. As for inſtance.

The Notions we have of God are, that he is Eternal, Self-exiſtent, abſolutely Perfect, infinitely Happy, full of Majeſty, Glorious in Holineſs; and that Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth is his Footſtool. And if we would rightly conſider this, and conſider withall what our own condition is, what needy, frail, deſpicable, and wretched things we are, this alone would powerfully move us, to fall down upon our Knees before him, to praiſe and magnifie his Name, to extol his Greatneſs, and to worſhip him with all ſuitable Awe and Reverence.

Again; We have this Notion of God, that he is about our Paths, and about our Beds, and understandeth all our ways; that he seeth in Secret; that he maketh manifest the Counsels of the Heart; and that where two or three are gathered together in his Name, there he is in the midst of them. And how naturally doth the consideration of God's Omnipresence, and Omniscience move us, to pray every where unto him? To pour out our Hearts before him? in all our necessities and circumstances to call upon him, and to speak to him with that sincerity of Heart, with that attention of Mind, with that fervency of Affection, and with that modest, humble, and reverent Behaviour, which becomes those, who are under the Eye, and in the presence and hearing of that infinite Being, who searcheth the very Heart and Reins?

This Notion we have of God too, that whatsoever he pleaseth that he doeth in Heaven, and in Earth; that he ordereth all things according to the Counsel of his own will; and that he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy: So that if any Man be more excellent than his Neighbour, whether it be in Spiritual, or in Temporal and Worldly respects, it is God that makes the difference, of his own good pleasure: And doth not this lay very strict obligations upon us to seek his face evermore? To be constant Supplicants at the Throne of Grace? And to give the Lord most humble and hearty thanks for the Benefits and Blessings, he is pleased to bestow upon us?

Again;

Again ; The Notion of God signifies a Being infinitely wise ; that knows all our wants, and what is best and most convenient for us : infinitely Powerful, that is able to answer all our necessities ; and infinitely Good , that extendeth his mercies to all his Works , and is particularly gracious to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him faithfully. And if we seriously consider that we depend upon his good Providence every moment of our Lives, it would powerfully move us, to have recourse unto him continually , to open our hearts to him ; to lay our necessities before him, importunately beseeching him to take us under his care ; and to supply us with all things needful both for Soul and Body.

Above all, it would charm us into Devotion, did we but consider, how God loves every Soul, which he hath created ; that as he is happy in himself, so he desires that we too may be perfectly happy in him ; that all his Dispensations are in order to this great end ; that the very Duties he exacteth at our hands, are intended to fit, and prepare us for it ; that the very afflictions he lays upon us are to discipline us for Heaven ; and that all things work together for good to them that love him. These considerations are enough to kindle in our hearts the most ardent affections towards him ; And where affection is, there will be all cheerful Obedience, and there our Love of God will make us with readiness, and zeal, and pleasure of Mind express the sense we have of his great Goodness, by the most devout Adorations.

It is for want of a true sense of God, that People are so seldom at Prayer; so hardly drawn to it; so cold, and careless, and, as it were, unconcerned at it. Right apprehensions of his Nature and Perfections do naturally cast such an influence upon the mind, as would soon set the Powers and Faculties of the Soul on motion, if we would dispose our selves so, as to be capable of those Divine impressions; and if we would duly consider what God is in himself. And for that purpose we should look every day for him in the Scriptures, and contemplate those Beauties and Glories, under which he is represented to us in the Scriptures; for there we have a true Revelation of his Essence and Attributes; there he is represented as a Being so Great and Holy, so Immense and Glorious, so Omnipotent and Omniscient, so Wise and Powerful, so Communicative Kind and Beneficent, and in every respect so Amiable and Adorable, that, were there no other considerations, this alone touching the transcendent Excellence of his Nature, would be a strong Argument to move us to worship him daily in the Beauty of Holiness.

II.

If besides this, we consider God in his Works, and as he stands related to us under the notion of a Being, in whom we Live, and Move, and have our Being, and to whom we owe all that we have, all that we are, and all that we expect and hope to be, we shall find what a just Right, Title, and Claim he hath to our daily

daily Devotion. These Works of God are of three sorts.

1. First, His Creating and Forming of us in the Womb. By Virtue hereof he doth justly challenge and require all possible services from us, as his peculiar Right and Due; and it was for this end, that he fashioned the several Members of our Bodies, and endued us with Rational Souls, that we should Glorifie him with our Bodies, and with our Spirits.

And what can be more reasonable, than that he, who gave us Hearts, should have them? That he who formed our Lips, should be praised and magnified with them? That we should Worship and fall down, and Kneel before that infinite Being, which is our Maker? *I will praise thee, O Lord* (saith the Holy Psalmist, for this reason) *because I am fearfully and wonderfully made, Psal. 139. 14.* And would to God every Man would seriously consider, before he goes out of the World, for what end and purpose he came into it! 'Twill be a very dismal thing in that day, when the terrors of Death are about him, to have the Torments of an Evil Conscience too, and to remember with anguish and bitterness, how many blessed Opportunities of Devotion he hath despised: how much time he hath thrown away upon Wicked, or upon vain Employments, which God sent him into the World to spend upon offices of Religion; and for how many years together he hath dishonoured the Majesty of Heaven with those Faculties, which were made

to serve, and Glorifie and Adore him. Think often, I beseech you, of the Day of your dissolution, when the Dust shall return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit shall return unto God, who gave it. Lay up betimes a good Treasure against that day: Put not off Devotion as a work proper only for a Death-bed. God alone knoweth, how you will be disposed at that time. *They have not cryed unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their Bed,* saith God, *Hosea 7. 14.* Your Hearts may deceive you at your last Hour, though you think your selves sure of them now. A Life of Piety and Devotion cannot possibly deceive you. It must needs save you many Tears, and Groans, and bitter Thoughts of Heart; but it cannot cost you any to consider, that you have remember'd the Creator from the days of your Youth.

2. Another work of God, by Virtue whereof he hath a just right to our Prayers and Praises, is his Providence. Hereby God preserves that Being, which he first gave us; supports our Faculties, and supplies us with all things, that are necessary and suitable to our Natures.

The Measures of God's Providence are not all equal or alike; but it differs in its proportion, according as things differ in Degree and Dignity. It is general over all things, and shews it self by conserving and sustaining every part of the Universe. It is particular and special over Men, who are the principal part of
the

the sublunary World ; and as they are Evil or Good, so doth God adapt and suit his Providence to them, according to their respective conditions. He tenders his Grace and Mercy even to the Wicked ; is Patient and Long-suffering towards them , that the sense of his Goodness may lead them to Repentance. Upon their sincere Repentance he Pardons them : but if instead of hearkning to his Calls, they continue obstinate , and go on still in their Wickedness, then he doth Punish and Plague them ; oftentimes makes them visible Examples of his Wrath and Vengeance, even in this World ; and sometimes too delivers them up to a Reprobate Mind, which is the heaviest and sorest Plague of all. To such as make a due use of his Grace he giveth more. These he Nurtureth and Loves, as a Father doth his Children, and indeed with much more tenderness and compassion. He taketh a most especial care of them : The very Hairs of their Heads are all numbred ; they want no manner of thing, that is really good for them ; and though he doth suffer them sometimes to be evil entreated and hardly used here, yet he never lets them go out of his hands ; but compensates their sufferings abundantly, and makes all things work together for their good ; nor can any thing in this World be able to separate them from his Love.

And doth not all this make it necessary for us, to be conversant daily at the Throne of Grace ? Is it God that upholdeth us ; and are not we concerned to beseech him not to withdraw

draw his arm from under us? Is it of his meer Compassion and Mercy, that we are not utterly consumed; and shall we not praise and adore him for it? Is it at his hands that we must receive every good and perfect gift; and shall we not repair to him in all our Necessities? Is the Sword, Famine, and Pestilence; every calamity we feel, and every Judgment we are afraid of; are all these sent from God, and are we not deeply concerned to deprecate his Vengeance? Is it God alone, that can forgive Sin; and is it not our duty to beg it upon our Knees? Or, have we not Sins to ask his Pardon for? Have we no other wants to be supplied? Are there no Mercies that we stand in need of? Have we no Souls nor Bodies to be provided for? Are there no Evils we desire to be delivered from? Are there no Dangers we would avoid? Is not God's Protection Day and Night necessary to be desired? Is not his special Grace and Favour to be Implored? Or, have we not received any Favours and Blessings to return him our Thanks for? These things carry their own light with them; and it must needs be the greatest stupidity, to be wanting to our selves in a case, where there are so many strict and weighty Obligations.

3. Besides these Works of Providence which relate mostly to this Life, we are to consider the stupendious Work of Redemption, whereby the great Lover of Souls hath done all that was on his part to do to prepare us for a Life Eternal. And one would think this to be work enough

enough for us all our days, to Bless and Praise, and Adore God for his unspeakable and infinite Love to lost Mankind, in sending the Son of his Love, the Lord Jesus into the World, that whosoever believeth in him should not Perish. The Exemplary Holiness of Christ's Life; his Death and Sufferings; his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven; his sending the Apostles to preach the Gospel unto all Nations; and the wonderful effusion of the Holy Spirit, to render their Ministry successful; and to be with the Church to the Worlds end; these were glorious Methods, whereby God carried on the great Work of Redemption. And as we ought with the most Devout Hearts to offer unto God daily our Sacrifices of Praise for these inestimable Blessings; so should we Beg the continual Assistance and Increment of his Grace; that We may make a due use of them, lest the Death of Christ, and the Preaching of his Gospel be all in vain to us; and lest we make our selves Reprobates and Sons of Perdition at the last. In the next Life there will be an end of Christ's Oeconomy; He will deliver up this his Kingdom to the Father, and then the state of every Man, whether it be in Bliss or in Misery, will be unalterable; And how can we think of another World, and not Pray unto God to Deliver us in the hour of Death, and in the day of Judgment? We cannot be such Fools as to think we shall live here for ever. All of us must die in our turns; though Men are apt to put the Day of their Dissolution far from them, yet sooner or later it will certainly come;
for

for it is appointed unto Man once to die, and after that to be judged, Heb. 9. 27. And how can we expect any happiness another day, if either we do not think there is such a thing, or do not think it worth our Prayers? It will be most just for God to deny us that, which we would not so much as ask for: That certainly is the easiest and least thing we can do, and if our Salvation be of such vast Concernment, that we must work it out with fear and trembling, it must needs be the greatest folly in the World to expect it, if we will not take, no not such little pains for it, as the Lifting up of the Heart, and the labour of ones Lips amounts to.

2. Having thus considered those Motives unto Prayer, which are taken from God's Perfections and Works, let us now proceed to those which may be drawn from the thing it self.

Prayer is a necessary and due acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty over all. He knoweth all our Necessities, whether we ask him or no: He is privy to the very secrets of our Hearts, though we pour not out our Complaints before him: He understandeth our thoughts afar off; and therefore he doth not stand in any need of our Supplications: He hath appointed us to pray to him; that thereby we may admire him the Lord Paramount, and that we may testify our inward sense, that our whole dependence is upon him; that whatever we have, we receive at his hands; that he hath the supreme Propriety in all that we enjoy; that the whole Earth is the Lords, and the

the fulness thereof; and for that Reason we are bound to do him Homage; all People must fall down before him, and all Nations must pay him service.

Prayer is the greatest Privilege we poor Creatures have in this World; That Dust and Ashes can speak freely to the God of Comfort; that we can repair to him in all our Streights and most melancholly Circumstances; that we can with confidence and safety open our very Hearts to him, and acquaint him with our Condition; that we can come with boldness to the Throne of Grace; and that we can beg of God with a full assurance, that we shall receive of him what we would have, or that which is much better.

Prayer is a direct Instrument of Vertue and Holiness. When we are at our Prayers, we are, or ought to be very serious; and when we are so, many serious thoughts are apt to fall in, touching Death and Judgment, touching Heaven and Hell, touching the Purity and Omniscience of that infinite Being we are speaking to, and touching the vain and uncertain Condition of this World. By this means our Hearts by degrees come to be weaned from this World, and to long for a Better; our Minds are kept in continual Awe, lest we offend God, whose mercy and goodness is to bring us to it; our Lusts cool, and we are led to Repentance; the Remembrance of our Sins and Follies becomes bitter; Humility, Charity, and Meekness take possession of our Souls; and

and we learn to be Patient, to resign our selves up into the hands of God, and submit to his Heavenly will in all cases.

But nothing can be a greater Motive unto Prayer, than the Power and Usefulness of it, in the returns it makes us. *The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much, Jam. 5. 16.* It hath wrought Miracles; and though Miracles are ceased long ago, yet God heareth still, and never do we go away from the Throne of Grace empty, if we pray as we should. Many times God hears our Prayers, and we are not sensible of it, because we do not presently receive the very thing we desire. But the request is Granted, though it may not be actually Fulfilled at our own time, and in our own way. For wise and good reasons God doth defer the bestowing of the matter we crave for, and sometimes exchangeth it, and gives us a Better thing in lieu of it. No Prayers miscarry if they be rightly Qualified, or if they, who offer them, be rightly Disposed.

II.

And this brings me to that, which we are to consider in the next place, *viz.* After what way and manner this great and solemn act of Religion ought to be performed.

I.

And First, When we are going to our Prayers, we must be very careful to go with Souls

Souls purified from Sin by sincere Repen-
 tance. *For God heareth not Sinners*, John 9. 31.
If I regard Iniquity in my heart, the Lord will
not hear me, Psal. 66. 18. *He that turneth away*
his Ear from hearing the Law, even his Prayer
shall be abomination, Prov. 28. 9. *I will that*
men pray every where, lifting up holy hands,
 1 Tim. 2. 8. where the Apostle alludes to a
 custom among the Jews, instituted by God him-
 self (and observed anciently by most Nations)
 of washing before Prayer, *Exod. 40. 32* A My-
 stical Rite signifying the Spiritual Cleanness,
 which is requisite in all that prepare themselves
 to speak unto the God of Purity: And so the
 Psalmist explains it, *Psal. 26. 6. I will wash my*
hands in Innocency; and so will I compass thine
Altar, O Lord.

These places of Scripture do not mean, that
 we must not Pray, if we have committed Sin,
 or if we have the sense of any guilt upon us:
 No, we must Pray the rather, that God may
 forgive and pardon the Sins we have commit-
 ted: But the meaning is, that we are not to
 go to our Prayers, with the love of Sin about
 us, or with purposes to Sin on still.

Our Souls must be clean and pure from
 wicked Resolutions and Affections; we must
 appear before the Lord empty, in this sense;
 void of all sinful Habits and Intentions. The
 Heart is the Censer, and it must be Holy;
 and the Incense must be Holy, which comes
 out of it. If any Lusts of Uncleaness be bur-
 ning there, it is as abominable, as the offering
 up

up of Unhallowed fire. If there be Envy or Hatred, Malice, Bitterness, or designs of Revenge, it is as if we lifted up hands defiled with Blood: For in the construction of the Gospel, *he that hateth his Brother is a murderer*, 1 Joh. 3. 15. If there be that which the Scripture calls Filthiness of Spirit, it is like the offering of Swines-Flesh. If there be a Ravenous or Quarrellsome temper, it is like the presenting of a Dog's Neck. If there be an insatiable or inordinate love of the World, it is like Sacrificing to an Idol. We should be sure therefore at our Devotion to have Penitent and Honest Hearts, pure Affections, and gracious Lips. It is the Holy Person, that makes the Prayer Holy; that Sanctifies the Altar and the Sacrifice upon it, so as to make the savour thereof sweet in God's Nostrils. Where Sin lyeth at the Door, it stops the passage of Prayer, and hinders it from being successful. Such a one hath no benefit, either by his own Prayers, or other Mens. Witness the Story of *Achan*, *Josh. 7*. *Achan* had kept some of the spoil, of *Fericho*, which was consecrated to the Lord; this Sin was imputed to the whole Congregation; and God refused to hear *Joshua's* Prayer for them; *The Lord said unto Joshua, get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, for they have even taken of the accursed thing; (that is, the thing which was devoted unto me, and which hath now brought a Curse upon them) Jos. 7. 10. 11.* Sin unrepented of hinders the Power and Efficacy of Prayer.

II.

Besides Innocence of Heart, there is required in a devout Person Constancy and Perseverance. *Pray without ceasing*, 1 Thess. 5. 17. *Continuing instant in Prayer*, Rom. 12. 12. *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance*, Ephes. 6. 18. *Continue in Prayer, and watch in the same with Thanksgiving*, Col. 4. 2. All which commands are pursuant to that of our Blessed Saviour, *that Men ought always to Pray, and not to faint*, Luke 18. 1.

These places of Scripture are not to be understood in such a strict sense, as if we were to employ our whole time at Prayer, without doing any thing else; for that is inconsistent with the business of our Callings, and impossible for humane Nature to do: But the meaning is, that our minds must always be devoutly disposed; that some portions of every day should be set aside for Prayer, that we should be diligent, and frequent at it, addicted to it, and intent upon it; and that we should not let slip any set or convenient hours of Devotions, but observe them constantly as oft as they return.

As Saint Chrysostom hath rightly noted, (in Col. 4. 2.) the Devil thoroughly knows what a good thing Prayer is; and therefore he mightily endeavours to keep People from it. He draws them into his own Snares, by drawing them away

way from God; by tempting them, first to pray seldom, and so by degrees to give it quite over. By this wile of the Devil there is a great strangeness between them and God, which at last endeth in direct Enmity: And then it falls out as it happens usually in differences between Man and Man, that the offender is the hardest to be reconciled.

It is therefore our Wisdom to Renew our Prayers, and to draw nigh unto God often; to repair to him as frequently, at least, as the Holy Psalmist speaks of, *Evening and Morning and at Noonday will I pray, and cry aloud*, Psal. 55. 17. By this means our Hearts will be kept up at a high Key; our acquaintance with God will not only be preserved, but increase too; the Duty it self will become easie and delightful; our Life will resemble in some measure the Heavenly state, and we shall prepare our selves by it for the services of Eternity; the Joys above will be our portion here; our Conversation will be every day in Heaven together with our Hearts; our Temptations unto Sin will lessen; our irregular Affections will be the better conquered, and the sooner transformed into a Divine Love; and if there could be a sinless State on Earth, this would be the ready way to it, because it would keep the Minds of Men under a continual Awe and Dread of offending that Holy, Just, and Omniscent Being, in whose Presence they must appear, and to whose Majesty they must speak the next hour.

Besides,

Besides, we must not always expect to be heard for once or twice speaking. God doth many times suspend the answering our desires, to Try and Exercise our Faith, to invigorate our Zeal, to make our Devotion the more fervent, and our Addresses to him the more and more importunate, like the Cries of the restless Widdow in the Parable, which our Saviour used as an Argument to shew, that Men *ought always to pray, and not to faint*, Luke 18. If therefore our wants are not supplied as we would have them, the fault is in our selves, because we are not so Constant, so Frequent, so Importunate at our Prayers, as we should be. It is a set and stated Course of Devotion that God is pleased with; and this is one reason why we reap so little profit by all our Labours under the Sun, because we squander away a great part of our time upon Vanity, or upon Vice, which should be devoted unto God, to maintain a continual intercourse and communion with him, and to fetch down his Blessings upon us: Such an intercourse as was between God and *Jacob*, when the Angels were Ascending and Descending on the Ladder.

III

Prayer must be accompanied with Faith. *If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him: But let him ask in Faith (or, with Faith) nothing wavering, &c. James 1. 5. 6.*

The meaning is not, that we must always confidently believe, that we shall most certainly receive every particular thing we pray for. We cannot confidently expect what God hath not some way or other, and in some measure or other, promised. And tho' he hath absolutely promised us all things which pertain to Eternal Life, and Godliness; yet there are other things, which appertain to this present Life, which he hath promised with some limitations; that is if such and such things be Necessary, or Profitable, or Convenient for us. Seeing then all the promises of God are not of equal Extent, and seeing ones Faith can go no farther than the promise goes, we cannot firmly believe, that we shall have every particular thing granted us, because we cannot certainly tell, whether this or that in particular will be Beneficial, or Proper for us: Whatever we may imagine or conceive in our own thoughts, it is God alone that knows that infallibly; and therefore we cannot be assured, that God will give it us.

We are to understand the matter thus then; that when we Pray we must be firmly persuaded in our minds, that God knoweth how to grant the thing we beg of him, and that he is able and ready to do it, if he sees it necessary or good for us. There must be no doubt of God's Power and Goodness, nor of his Care for us: *He that cometh to him must believe, not only that he is, but also that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. 11 6.* When therefore we are preparing our selves for Prayer, that we may prepare our Hearts aright, we should

should entertain our Minds with the serious consideration of God's Attributes and Perfections ; that his Mercy reacheth over all his Works ; that he is the faithful God ; that he cannot Lie ; that with him there is no variableness or shadow of Change ; that his promises are Yea and Amen ; that he is nigh unto all who call upon him faithfully, and that he will (one way or other) fulfill the desires of them that fear him. Such Considerations as these will enliven and invigorate our Prayers with an active Faith ; and in the strength thereof we may draw near and fall low, in full assurance that his Ear is open, and his Hand ready, to give us the very things we long for, or something else which in his infinite Wisdom he knoweth to be better for us.

IV

In our Prayers we must with all humbleness of Mind evermore submit our selves to God's Will and Pleasure. *Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*, is a part of that Prayer, which our Blessed Lord himself formed for our Daily use. And tho' those words do primarily mean such an active, chearful, and universal Obedience to God's Commands as the Angels of Heaven express ; Yet in a Secondary Sense they signifie too such Patience and Submission to God's Providence, as was so eminent in the Lord of Life and Glory ; who in his last Agonies resigned up himself into his Fathers hands, with this holy request, *Not my Will, but thy Will be done*.

B

Because

Because we are so ignorant of those things which are really for our good, it is very reasonable we should leave it unto God to determine for us; and it is for good reasons that he doth sometimes deny even his faithful Servants the request of their Lips.

Though the matter of their Prayers, or the thing they desire to have, may be Lawful enough in it self, yet accidentally and in the consequence it may be hurtful, or very dangerous, tho' they do not think it; and in such a case it is a Favour and Kindness, if God gives them such a denial as the Lord Jesus gave *James* and *John* when they put their Mother upon asking *that they might sit, the One on his Right Hand, and the Other on his Left in his Kingdom*; *Ye know not what ye ask*, saith our Saviour, *Matth. 20. 22.*

Or perhaps the thing they pray against, may be indeed for their good, tho' they be not sensible of it for the present; and then God is their Friend in suffering them to labour under it, especially if he grant their desires another way; as he never faileth to do in such cases. You know *St. Paul* complained of a Thorn in his Flesh, a Messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, *2 Cor. 12. 7.* Divines cannot certainly tell, what the particular thing was, which he compared to a Thorn; whether it was some acute Disease in his Body, or some persecution outwardly. Questionless it was some sharp Affliction or other, which touched him to the quick; and *St. Chrysostom's* opinion is very probable, that it was

was some very harsh usage he received from some opposers of the Truth, who were the Devils Instruments to imprison, beat, and scourge the Apostle. Whatever that Thorn in his Flesh was, notwithstanding all his Prayers it was not drawn out. He besought the Lord thrice (that is, often saith *St. Chrysostom*) that it might depart from him. But his Prayers could not prevail: Because whatever the Devils Instruments intended, God intended it in Mercy to him, that he might not be exalted above measure, through the abundance of his Revelations.

However his Prayers did not return empty; instead of Deliverance from Pain, he received divine Assistance and Support from above. My Grace, said God, is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness; and that was far better than if he had his Prayers answered in kind. And from this single instance we learn, whatever our Condition, and whatever our own Desires may be, still to submit to the will and pleasure of God; who best knows what is fit for us. Tho' we have not the very thing we pray for, yet God will give us that which will do us more good, if we be but mindful of our Duty to him. And tho' he lets us go about with Thorns in our Flesh, yet his Grace is as sufficient for us, as it was for *St. Paul*; and as long as we receive a sufficient measure of Humility, Patience, and Meekness, together with a Mortified Temper, and a Christian frame of Heart, we have reason to bless God for such a plentiful and rich return of our

B 2

Prayers;

Prayers; and to adore his Goodness, that we have much more than we deserve, and much better things than we desire.

V

Prayer must be accompanied with great attention; I mean a settled and composed Temper, a steady Mind, with our Thoughts gathered together into a Centre, and all of them fix'd upon the solemn business we are about. Men cannot expect that God will mind those Prayers, which they do not mind themselves; or that he will open his Ears to those, who are not serious before him, and with him. The Text bears a farther Construction, 1 Cor. 14. 15. But yet in this sense, we are to pray with the Understanding; to consider and mind well what is uttered in time of Prayer; not to offer the Sacrifice of Fools, who run by rote, and at all adventures; but with recollected Thoughts to ponder and attend to what we say unto the Majesty of Heaven.

When we are at Prayer, we should call home our Fugitive Thoughts, and employ them with such seriousness, and united consideration, as if we were going to die. The custom of the Lord Jesus was to go up to some Mountain to pray; thereby teaching all his followers to take their leave of the World, for the due performance of their Devotion; and during the time of it, to retire as near as may be to Heaven, and to have their minds there, and there only. To draw nigh unto God with our
Lips,

Lips, and at the same time to let our thoughts rove and ramble; and run away at a great distance from him, is in effect to tell God, that we are willing to pay him some outward Civility, but care not for the business we come to him about; and how then can we expect that God will attend to it? 'Tis necessary therefore to recollect our selves, to fix our minds, when we fall down on our Knees before him, and in order thereunto we should consider how infinitely great that Being is, to whom we make our Addresses, and of what vast importance the thing is, which we are transacting with him; no less than the Eternal Welfare of our Soul and Body; which we should pray for with the greater attention, because we are not sure of another Opportunity to sollicite God about it.

At the Publick Service of the Church, it is an excellent means to keep our thoughts at Home, to give great heed to what is uttered by him that ministreth, that is our Mouth and Intercessour; not to lose a word, but to keep an even pace with him in our Meditations; and as he goes along, to mind, ponder, and weigh the things spoken, because the Soul lodgeth so near unto the Ear, that if the door be open to let in the voice, the Inhabitant within cannot but listen and be attentive.

VI.

If we carefully observe this, it will help to carry us on to that which is another Qualifi-
B 3
cation

cation of Prayer ; I mean Affection and Fervency. When we apprehend and mind the matter of our Prayers, and add to it an Earnestness and Vehemence of desire ; then is our Devotion truly said to be Fervent and Affectionate. And this is one sense of that Phrase which we meet with thrice in the Epistles ; *Praying with the Spirit*, 1 Cor. 14. 15. *Supplication in the Spirit*, Ephes. 6. 18. and *Praying in the Holy Spirit*, Jude 20. In the strict sense it signifies Praying by the Extraordinary Assistance and Gift of the third Person in the Holy Trinity.

For in those first times of Christianity, there was among many other Extraordinary Gifts, a Miraculous Gift of Prayer, wherewith some of the Church were Divinely and immediately inspired, so that they were able on a sudden to conceive and utter Prayers, which were apt and suitable to the Christian Religion ; the old Jewish Forms being then some of them useless, and all of them imperfect, because the condition of Church-affairs was now changed. Upon this account there was then great need of an extraordinary Gift of Prayer, to supply the wants of the Christian Assemblies.

But this extraordinary Gift ceased in a little time, stated Forms of Divine Service being provided for the Churches use ; Forms which had been Originally conceived by inspired Men, and which were afterward preserved and used by those who had benefited so much by them. There is no such thing as Praying by the

*See Dr. Hammond
on Jude the 20th,
and his Vindication
of the Liturgy.*

the Spirit in a strict sense ; or, Praying by the extraordinary Gift of the Holy Ghost : nor in truth, is there any need of it now, when there is a sufficiency of Useful, Ancient, and excellent Forms.

And yet we must in some sense pray in, or by the Spirit, or else our Prayers will do us no good. We must pray with that Zeal, which is kindled in the Heart by the ordinary operation of the Holy Spirit. We must pray with Spiritual Affection, with ardency of Desire, with Fervency of Spirit, and with Hearts lifted up and Inflamed. Our Prayers must not be Spiritless, nor must we be Cold, or Lukewarm at them ; God heareth not Prayers which are offered up by People that do not stir up their Affections, nor chase their Desires, nor move their Minds into a Warmth ; but Pray carelessly as if they were indifferent whether God heard them or no. Such Prayers can never reach the Heavens ; they are lost by the way ; they drop down presently to the ground for want of Affection and Fervency, which should have been their Wings.

In short, when we call upon God, we should employ all the powers and faculties of our Souls, and lay out our whole Man upon the business before us ; and because the consideration of God's Attributes gives life and vigour to the whole body of Religion, we should possess our minds with the sense of those perfections : and especially with the sense of his great Goodness. For as the Notion of his Greatness,
B 4 Power,

Power, Justice, and Omnipresence is naturally apt to create in us attention of mind to what we say ; so the consideration of his Mercy and Benignity is enough to Charm our Affections.

In order therefore to Fervency in Prayer, let us think of the wonderful kindness and goodness of God, and carry the thoughts of it along with us throughout the whole tenor of our Devotion, how good he is in his own Nature ; how Communicative and Beneficent to his poor Creatures ; how Gracious to Mankind ; how Merciful to Sinners ; how easie to be intreated upon our Repentance ; and how ready he is to pardon Iniquity, Transgression and Sin.

2. We should cast our selves down under an humble sense of our own Unworthiness and Vileness, and with a thankful acknowledgement of the Happiness we have, that Worms, Dust and Ashes, Nothings, Creatures, that by our Sins are worse than nothing, have the favour and freedom to speak before him, and to him. These Considerations are good inward means to raise our Hearts and Affections into a warmth, when we lift up our voice in Prayer.

To which I shall add, 3. but one direction more touching outward help ; and it is in all your Devotions to use some wholesome and affecting Forms of Prayer : Whatever hath been objected against them, they are all Pious and Unprejudiced Spirits of great advantage. For thereby the Soul is rid of a great variety of thoughts,

thoughts, which bring Distractions. The Mind is not at a loss for Words, nor the Invention to seek for Matter; nor is there that fear upon us, which otherwise must needs be upon all humble Men, of speaking irreverently, or unbecomingly to God. Every thing else being prepared, we have no more to do, but to prepare our Hearts, and stir our Affections. The Wood and the Sacrifice being ready at hand, our only business is, to bring Fire to the Altar; and to keep it burning.

And here let me recommend unto your special use those Forms of Prayer, which our Church useth in her Publick Liturgy. Forms that carry with them the true Spirit of Primitive Christianity, and are agreeable to those, which were used in the Primitive Ages, and some of them the very same. Forms that were thoroughly digested, and put together by the great Men at the time of Reformation; Great for their Learning; Great for their Wisdom; Great for their eminent Zeal, and Piety, and Love of Truth; and the Greater still, because afterwards they suffered for this Work by the hands and fury of the Romanists, and some of them settled it at the stake with their last Blood. In Composing that Book, they did not consider how they might gratifie particular Fancies, but how they might answer the necessities, and provide for the real good of the whole Church; And accordingly such Prayers were, after much deliberation, pitched upon, as were most profitable, most significant, and most moving. And 'tis observable of them, that they are general-

ly short, and therefore easie to be Learned and Remembred; so they are very full too, and so comprehensive for matter and signification, that there is nothing needful for Soul or Body, but what there are Petitions for; and those too, relishing of such a Spirit of Piety, as is enough to affect and move the dullest Hearts, if our Minds do but go along with them; and without that, all the Prayers in the World will not work upon us.

VII.

In all our Prayers we must be sure to be Charitable. When our Saviour gave his Church a Prayer of his own Composing, he directed us to pray in the Plural number, even at our private Devotion. *When thou Prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret— And after this manner pray ye, Our Father, which art in Heaven— Give us this day our daily bread— Forgive us our trespasses— And lead us not into temptation; Matth. 6. 6, 9, 11, 12, 13.*

Next to our serving God, all our business in this World is, to do our selves and others all the good we can; and because the condition of our nature is so scanty and weak, that it is not in our power to do all that is needful with our own hands, therefore we must apply our selves to him, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, that he may supply all Mens wants out of his own infinite and inexhaustible treasures. Every one therefore must have a share
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in our Prayers, because every one of us is in some want or other. *I exhort therefore that first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all Men,* saith St. Paul in 1 Tim. 2.1. *For Kings and for all that are in Authority; for one another,* saith St. James, Jam. 5. 16. *For them that despitefully use you, and persecute you,* saith our Blessed Saviour himself, Matth. 5.44.

Indeed this last direction, about praying for ones Enemies, is commonly look'd upon as a hard saying; but the only reason is, because there is so much ill nature in the World. The Lord Jesus, and his first Martyr St. Stephen did both go out of the World praying for their barbarous and blood-thirsty Enemies, the very worst of Men. And that our Prayers may be, as theirs were, Holy and Efficacious, they must proceed from sedate Minds, from Hearts full of Gentleness, Goodness and Compassion. There are two things especially, which infect all Prayer, and turn it into Abomination.

The first is unreasonable Anger; when Mens Passions are suffered either to start without just and sufficient cause, or to rise unto an immoderate Height, or to last an undue time. Such Heats are sinful, and consequently as noisom Fuel in the Heart, as Fire and Brimstone of Hell. Therefore St. Paul requires us to *lift up holy hands without wrath,* 1 Tim. 2.9. And this is one reason of that other command, Ephes. 4.26. *Let not the Sun go down upon your wrath;* because the Evening was wont to be a

constant time for solemn Devotion, Anger at best is a weak Passion in us, an Argument of great infirmity in our Nature, that shews how near of kin we are to the Beasts that perish. Therefore amidst all Representments we should govern our selves by God's Example, whose Wrath moves with a very slow pace; *and endureth but the twinkling of an Eye, Psal. 30. 5.* But when we approach to God we must be sure to keep out the Brutal part from mingling with our Devotion, to bring our Minds to a right Christian temper, and to speak unto the Author of Love and Peace, without Coals in our Bosom and without any Warmth, but that of Zeal and Charity.

2 The other thing which corrupts all Prayer is Malice; when that, which ought to be a transient Passion, setteth, and fixeth into a wicked Habit, so that the Mind becomes Implacable, Irreconcilable, and Revengeful. This is utterly inconsistent with the Spirit of Christ's Religion, which commands us to forgive a Brother that sinneth, *even till seventy times seven, Matth. 18.22.* That is, as often as he sinneth and repents of it. All that God himself requires at our hands is, Prayer and Repentance: And if this be the price of his favour, surely we sinful wretched Men should think it enough to purchase each others Charity. What Man is he that liveth and sinneth not? And how can any of us expect Mercy, if we shew none? How can we hope, with our crys and importunities to move the Bowels of God, as long as we have no Bowels our selves? Or
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(which is the same thing) none but what we shut up for our fellow Creatures? It is a peremptory Sentence, *Matth. 6.15. If we forgive not Men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* It is observable, that our Saviour took hold of frequent occasions, to inculcate the necessity of mutual Charity and Mercifulness, as one great Characteristical note of a Christian indeed. And that we might continually remember it, and be afraid to neglect it, He inserted it into that Prayer which we are to use as daily as we need our Bread; *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* And with what confidence can an uncompassionate, and uncharitable Man look up to the Father of Mercies, with that, or any other Prayer in his Mouth? What is this, but to bring a Curse upon himself, instead of a Blessing? What is this, but a ready way to have all his Prayers flung back upon his Face with Indignation and Scorn; since it is the rule of God's proceedings, *that he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath shewed no mercy,* Jam. 2.13.

VIII.

To all these necessary Qualifications of Prayer, I must add, in the last place, that we must Pray with Reverence. For though this be the least considerable thing, because it is an external bodily gesture, which bears no proportion to the necessary dispositions of the Soul; yet it is of such moment, that if we pray not in an humble manner, it looks as if we did not consider

sider or know what a weighty business we are about ; A cover'd Head, a heavy Eye, a stiff Neck, and an unbended Knee are far from being expressions of that great sense we ought to have of God's Majesty, and of our own Vileness, and infinite distance from him. And besides the Decency of this matter, it is to be considered, that Bowings and Prostrations, and such outward acts of Religious Worship, are God's proper and peculiar right ; or else the second Commandment would not have it unlawful to give them away to other things. Indeed as to actions of this nature, Men should be careful, not to fly out into Vanity, Fantasticalness, or Superstition, but contain themselves within the bounds of an Humble and Reasonable service. When Decency and Prudence are observed, Reverent gestures are of great use to heighten the Devotion of the Heart ; and at the Publick Service of the Church they are Exemplary too, and by consequence good means in their kind, to provoke, assist, and raise the Devotion of all.

I have now done these two things, which I was desirous to discourse of in their due order, to form in your Hearts a Devout temper, and to instruct you in the way, how you are to offer unto God your Daily Sacrifice, so that it may be Holy and Acceptable to him. If we intend to be wise for our selves, and to order our Life, so that it may be well with us ; nothing can be of greater concernment, excellence, or advantage to us, than a Spirit of Devotion.

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Hereby we become conformable to the Image of our Blessed Saviour ; whose custom was, not only to repair to the Temple and Synagogues, there to joyn with the rest of the Jews in the Publick Worship of God ; but to retire also into Solitudes and Desarts for Private Commerce with his Father , and sometimes to continue whole Nights in Prayer : Nor is it possible for us to walk as we should, but by treading in some fair measure in those steps of his, and by leading, as he did, a life of Piety.

Hereby we resemble too those first Disciples of his, on whose Hearts the Blood of Christ was so warm , and in whose Spirits there was such a constant Fervor and Zeal, that they were daily in the Temple praising and blessing God, and divided their hours between the publick Sanctuary, and that private House or Oratory by it, whither they were constrained to go for those solemn Offices, which were peculiar to Christianity.

By a Spirit of Devotion we have our Hearts daily there, where our only true Treasure is ; we are taking every hour a new step out of this vexatious and vain World ; we exercise the Faith , Patience, and Humility of Saints ; we learn to be Meek, Charitable, and Holy ; We are full of the joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost , even amidst those Thistles and Brambles, which we are to go through towards God's Kingdom ; we lie down with Pleasure, sleep in Peace, and rise again under the covert of the Divine Protection ; we have God al-
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ways in our thoughts ; and live daily upon the sense of his present Goodness , and upon the Credit of his Power , Faithfulness and Truth for the future , replenished with those hopes , which will never make us ashamed ; we think every day of our latter end , and prepare for it , and lay up before-hand an inestimable Treasure against it ; which is the only thing that can stand us in stead on our Death-Beds , when the satisfactions of this life will slip out of our hands like Sands , and slide away from us like a Shadow.

This and much more comes by a Spirit of Devotion ; and therefore let me beseech you to be ever mindful of that ; that which will return you your last and richest Crop , when you have done with all your Corn , Wine , and Oyl . Now for the kindling and cherishing of a Spirit of Devotion in the Hearts , give me leave to propose these following means.

I.

That we never neglect Private Prayer. Our Blessed Saviour sends us into our Closets , there to shut our Doors after us , *Matth. 6.* And the reason is , because every Man hath some particular Sins to beg God's forgiveness for , some particular Mercies to be implored ; some particular wants to be supplied ; some particular Graces to be desired. God hath no where required , nor is it proper for us , to proclaim all our necessities from the House-top : and therefore we are to go to him , who is in secret , and
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to whom we may unboſom our ſelves with freedom and ſafety. This will not only breed an awe upon our Minds, with an hearty affection to that Divine Being we familiarly ſpeak to in Private; but it will alſo make us in love with that, which is the means of this familiarity; ſo that by Praying often, we ſhall be the more willing and ready to Pray ſtill; nor will it be an eaſie matter for us to venture, either to begin any buſineſs, without begging God's aſſiſtance and protection over us; or to cloſe up the Day, without giving him thanks and praiſe for the Mercies of it.

II.

Where Men have the care of Families committed to them, they ſhould teach them to be of a devout temper too by their own Example. Remember the pious reſolution of *Joſhua*, *Joſ. 24. 15.* *As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.* When a Spirit of Devotion influen- ceth a whole Houſhold, every ones Zeal is kept warm and increaſed by it, and the Bleſſing of God is upon them all. To this end we ſhould teach our Children and Servants to Pray, as our Lord taught his Family. And by his giving them a Form, he hath ſhewed us, which is an Effectual way of breeding up our reſpective charges in the fear and nurture of the Lord; *viz.* by putting ſome ſhort and wholeſome Prayers into their Mouths and Memories. And this advantage every private Family might eaſily get by our publick Service Books, if People would but apply their minds in Diligence

gence to use it, as they should. There is in it great variety and store of choice Forms, which may be digested and remembred with the more facility, because they are concise : Nor is there any condition of Life, but we may pick out some Forms, which are one way or other suitable to our circumstances, especially as to our spiritual wants; and if People would be careful to learn them, and imprint them in their hearts; they would not only be devoutly disposed in the midst of their secular affairs, but be furnished too with matter to offer continually up to God, at least in their minds and thoughts. For even at the works of their Callings Men may meditate; They may think often upon God, and of things pertaining to Godliness, without any loss of time, or hindrance to their worldly Employments. By the very lifting up of the Eye a thought of Heaven may fall in, and of the way to get thither. Any the least work of Nature is enough to put us in mind of the Divine Power and Wisdom. Nay, the very Works of our own hands may help us to consider how necessary it is to work out our Salvation above all things. If then our Secular Affairs there be frequent occasions for Meditation, there must needs be frequent opportunities for Prayer too, at least for Mental Devotion. And how easie a matter is it for any Man at the business of his Vocation, to lift up his heart with some such Ejaculations as these? *O Lord, dispose the way of thy Servant towards the attainment of everlasting salvation. O Lord, direct, sanctifie and govern both my heart and body, in the ways of thy*

thy Laws, and in the works of thy Commandments. Prevent me, O Lord, in all my doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further me with thy continual help. I humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon my infirmities. O Lord, grant me such strength and protection as may support me in all dangers, and carry me through all temptations. O Lord, create and make in me a new and contrite heart. O Lord, keep me both outwardly in my Body, and inwardly in my Soul. O Lord, give unto me the increase of Faith, Hope, and Charity. O God, mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule my heart. We have a great number of such useful and holy Petitions in our Liturgy, which if people would take but a little pains to fix in their Memories, their hearts would be always ready; ready for God; ready with Sweet Incense to offer up to him; so ready provided, that honest Tradesmen in their very Shops, painful Husbandmen at the Plough, and the poorest Servants at the Mill, would not be at a loss for some Godly Prayers to send to the Throne of Grace at every turn, to be united to the Intercessions of the Lord Jesus for us all.

III.

But the best way to strengthen and increase in us a spirit of Devotion, is constantly to attend the Publick Assemblies, and to bear our parts in them, at the House of God. For this reason God loveth the Gates of Sion, more than all the Dwellings (or Private Houses) of
Jacob,

Jacob, because at the Sanctuary the Prayers of his Saints are most fervent. Thither we go to sing aloud unto God our strength; to make a joyful noise unto the God of *Jacob*. There we meet together to offer up all our praises with one Heart, and with one Lip. There our Joynt Devotion conglomerates in its right Center. There every one helpeth to inflame his own Zeal; and his Bretherens also. There spark mixeth with spark, and all serves to set fire to the Sacrifice. This therefore is the chief thing I would recommend to your Christian care and practice to attend with all possible diligence the publick and solemn service of God. What a shame is it, that the ways of *Sion* should mourn for want of comers to the Temple? That the fire and the wood should be in a readiness, and the Lambs be missing? Men little think of those severe times, when the Primitive Christians were wont, rather than fail, to rise up at Midnight, and to steal and creep away into Holes and Caves, to Pray and sing Praises together. How joyful were all pious Hearts in those peaceable times following, when they saw Christian Churches erected, and the Doors of them open, so that they might without fear or danger enter in to worship God in the Beauty of Holiness? What Multitudes thronged in, to offer violence to the Kingdom of God in this sense, and (as *Tertulian* speaks) to Beleaguer Heaven with a great Army? And with Alacrity and Zeal did they send up their joynt Prayers, when (as *St. Jerom.* tells us) their Amen was like the noise of Thunder? And how can we reflect on those happy Ages with-

without lamenting the great Degeneracy of this, when it is so hard a matter to perswade some people to repair, though it be but once a day, to the solemnities of God's Worship? For God's sake, and your own Soul's sake, let me at last perswade you, what is Priest and Parish, but one large Family? And why should we not meet once a day especially (I wish it might be oftner) to pray unto God our Father, to be Merciful and Gracious, and provident for us all? And where can we meet so properly, so decently, so conveniently, as in our common Fathers House, who hath called us all unto Hope, and unto one Business? Are our Families so little that we cannot spare so much as one out of an House, to be Advocate and Intercessor for the rest? Is the distance from the Church so great, that you should count it more tedious than a Sabbath-days Journey? Are our Sins so few and inconsiderable, that there is no need of our Prayers for Pardon? Is our business so urgent, that we cannot spare a few minutes for the Honour of God, and for the good of our Souls? Have we lost no time, that is necessary for us to redeem? Our own safety and preservation, and the Blessing of God upon all our Labours, and the prosperity of the whole Kingdom; are these such trifling things, that we should not think it worth our while to step over our Thresholds to meet together at Prayer for them? For God's sake, let us in time lay to heart the things, which thus manifestly belong to our Peace. If nothing else can make us serious and thoughtful, a Death-Bed will; and then it may be too late, because we may
not

not be serious to good purpose. Whether we shall be then true Penitents, or truly Devout, is a thing uncertain; For it depends altogether upon the Grace of God; and Men may Sin their time of Grace away. Our safest course is to provide for Eternity betimes; and not to harden our hearts, but to hear the voice of God, and to answer it with an Eccho of Prayers and Praises, while it is yet called to Day: And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the whole Israel of God. *Amen.*

Forms

*Forms of PRAYER
which may be used at
Home every Morning and
Evening daily.*

Morning Prayers.

O Lord our Heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day, Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no Sin, neither run into any kind of Danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that which is righteous in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Almighty Lord and Everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our Hearts and Bodies in the ways of thy Laws, and in the works of thy Commandments, that through thy mighty Protection both here and ever, we may be preserved

ved in Body and Soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

PRevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorifie thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy may obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Almighty and most Merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we being ready both in Body and Soul, may chearfully accomplish those things, that thou wouldest have done, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty and everlasting God, give us the increase of Faith, Hope, and Charity; and that we may receive that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

GRant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will through Christ our Lord.

Lord

Lord of all Power and Might, who art the Author and Giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the Love of thy Name, increase in us true Religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a Sacrifice for Sin, and also an Ensamble of Godly Life; give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable Benefit; and also daily endeavour our selves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy Life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

GRrant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this World may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty and Everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the Sins of all them that are Penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite Hearts; that we worthily lamenting our Sins, and acknowledging our Wretchedness, may obtain of thee the God of all Mercy perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

WE humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities, and for the glory of thy Name turn from us all
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those Evils we most righteously have deserved; and grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy Honour and Glory, through our only Mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ our Lord.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our Nature, we cannot always stand upright; grant unto us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, &c.

Evening Prayers.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord, and by thy great Mercy defend us from all Perils and Dangers of this Night, for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Almighty and Everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth thy Right-hand to help and defend us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty

Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of our selves to help our selves ; keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls ; that me may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the Body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the Soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Lord, we beseech thee, mercifully to hear our Prayers, and spare all those who confess their Sins unto thee ; that they whose Consciences by Sin are accused, by thy merciful pardon may be absolved , through Christ our Lord.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy Grace may mercifully be relieved, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Almighty and Everlasting God , who dost govern all things in Heaven and Earth ; mercifully hear the Supplications of thy People, and grant us thy peace all the days of our Life, through Christ our Lord.

O Lord, who hast taught us , that all our doings without Charity are nothing worth ; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of Charity, the very bond of Peace, and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth, is counted dead before thee ; grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake.

O Lord God most Holy, O Lord most Mighty, O Holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of Eternal Death: Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our Hearts, shut not thy merciful Ears to our Prayers; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge Eternal, suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of Death to fall from thee.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, and make us the Sons of God, and Heirs of Eternal Life; grant us, we beseech thee, that having this hope, we may purifie our selves, even as he is pure; that when he shall appear again with Power and great Glory, we may be made like unto him in his Eternal and Glorious Kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth ever one God, World without end.

GRant, O Lord, that as we are Baptized into the Death of thy Blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections, we may be buried with him; and that through the Grave, and Gate of Death, we may pass to our joyful Resurrection, for his Merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Lord,

O Lord, who never failest to help and govern them, whom thou dost bring up in thy stedfast fear and love; Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good Providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Lord, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness, through Christ our Lord.

UNto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit our selves. The Lord bless us, and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up his Countenance upon us, and give us peace, both now and evermore.

Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, &c.

Short

*Short PRAYERS fit to be
learn'd by Heart, and to
be used by single Persons
at any time.*

Lord have mercy upon me.
O God make clean my Heart within
me,

And take not thy holy Spirit from me.

O Lamb of God that takest away the Sins of
the World, grant me thy Peace.

O Lord deal not with me after my Sins :

Neither reward me after mine Iniquities.

Lord have mercy upon me, and incline my
Heart to keep thy Laws.

Grant that all Carnal affections may die in me,
and that all things belonging to the Spirit may
live and grow in me.

Grant that I may have power and strength to
have Victory, and to Triumph against the Devil,
the World, and the Flesh.

Lord send me help from thy Holy place ;
And evermore mightily defend me.

Let the Enemy have no advantage of me,

Nor let the Wicked approach to hurt me.

Be unto me, O Lord, a strong Tower

From

From the face of my Enemies.

O Saviour of the World, who by thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed me, save me and help me, I humbly beseech thee, O Lord.

O Lord, bless me and keep me: O Lord lift up the light of thy Countenance upon me, and give me peace.

Lord, hold thou up my goings in thy Paths, that my footsteps slip not.

Keep me as the apple of an Eye.

Hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

O cleanse me from my secret faults.

And keep thy Servant back from presumptuous Sins.

O remember not the Sins and Offences of my Youth; but according to thy mercy think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness.

O keep my Soul and deliver me: Let me not be confounded, for I have put my trust in thee.

Lord hide not thy face from me, nor cast thy Servant away in displeasure.

Thou hast been my succour: Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my Salvation.

Into thy hands I commend my Spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of Truth.

O let not the Foot of Pride come against me; and let not the hand of the Ungodly cast me down.

Turn thy face from my Sins; and put out all my misdeeds.

Make me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit in me.

Comfort the Soul of thy Servant; for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my Soul.

Teach

Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth ; O knit my heart unto thee, that I may fear thy name.

So teach me to number my days, that I may apply my Heart unto Wisdom.

O let me have Understanding in the way of Godliness.

O that my ways were made so direct, that I might keep thy Statutes !

I am a stranger upon Earth : O hide not thy Commandments from me.

Open thou mine Eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy Law.

Lord, look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that fear thy name.

I have gone astray, like as a Sheep that is lost : O seek thy Servant, for I do not forget thy Commandments.

Do well, O Lord, unto those that are good and true of Heart.

As for me, I am poor and in misery, haste thee unto me, O God.

Thou art my helper and my Redeemer ; O Lord, make no long tarrying.

F I N I S.



*Books lately Printed for W. Crooke,
at the Green-Dragon without
Temple-Bar.*

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F I N I S.
